



Alaska Public Lands Information Centers
605 W 4th Avenue
Anchorage AK 99501
Phone (907) 271-2737
<http://www.nps.gov/aplic>

Canoe Routes In Southcentral Alaska



Alaska has many officially designated National Wild and Scenic Rivers with varying levels of white water difficulty, as well as countless streams and lakes suitable for canoeing and rafting. A limited number of these rivers in Alaska have road access to put-in and take-out points, as well as boat rentals on site, and car shuttle service for returning. Three of the places with these services* in Southcentral Alaska are listed in this handout. They provide excellent wilderness canoe trips, from 2 days to 2 weeks.

For those wishing to do a more elaborate trip, find their own transportation to put-in and take-out points, or secure their own boat rentals, the references at the end of this handout have information on over a hundred other trip options.

**This should not be considered a comprehensive listing. These are the service providers we know of at this time. If you know of others who provide this same service who are not listed, please notify us so that they can be included.*

Lynx Lake Loop, Nancy Lake State Recreation Area

Contact:
Alaska State Parks
Mat-Su/Copper River Area Office
HC 32 Box 6706
Wasilla, AK 99654
(907) 745-3975

This state recreation area contains an eight-mile chain of lakes, the Lynx Lake Loop. The portages are well-marked and there are designated campsites on the canoe trail. Public use cabins are also available for rent. The Lynx Lake Loop is an ideal weekend trip, although it can be paddled in a full day. A longer trip can be made by continuing south from Lynx Lake to Butterfly and Skeenta Lakes before returning on the same route to rejoin the loop. For those who prefer river canoeing,

there is a put-in via the Little Susitna River, at Mile 57, Parks Highway in Houston. The river is mostly easy traveling but some canoeing experience is advisable. Travel time on the river is four to five hours.

Canoe rental and shuttle service available at Nancy Lakes:
Tippecanoe
PO Box 1175
Willow, AK 99688-1175
(907) 495-6688

Swan Lake/Swanson River Routes, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

Contact:
Kenai National Wildlife Refuge
PO Box 2139
Soldotna, AK 99669
(907) 262-7021

The Swan Lake and Swanson River canoe routes are located in the northern lowlands of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, in an area that is a nationally designated wilderness.

will have to arrange your own return shuttle at the take out.

The Swan Lake Route connects 30 lakes with forks of the Moose River. Alternate routes provide trips from 2-4 days in length. The only shuttle available is provided by the outfitter listed below if your take out is at the Moose River Bridge on the Sterling Highway.

Canoe rental and shuttle service available at Moose River:
Great Alaska Fish Camp
SR #218
Sterling, AK 99672
(907) 262-9337
(800) 544-2261

The Swanson River Route links more than 40 lakes with 46 miles of the Swanson River. The entire 80-mile route can be traveled in less than one week. However, you



Delta and Gulkana National Wild and Scenic Rivers, Bureau of Land Management

Contact:
Bureau of Land Management
Glennallen District Office
Box 147
Glennallen, AK 99588
(907) 822-3217

Canoe rental and shuttle service available at Tangle Lakes:
Tangle Lakes Lodge
P.O. Box 3006
Paxon, AK 99737
or
PO Box 670386
Chugiak, AK 99567
(907) 688-9173

The Denali Highway, 21 miles from Paxson or 114 miles from Cantwell, provides access to both these rivers, but the Gulkana River is more easily accessed from the Richardson Highway at the BLM campground on Paxson Lake.

Both rivers are designated National Wild and Scenic Rivers and are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which has informational brochures for each. **Please note:** *Both Rivers have stretches of whitewater (Class III on the Delta and Class III-IV on the Gulkana) and should be attempted only by experienced boaters.*

A boat launch at the Tangle Lakes Campground provides access to Round Tangle Lake. It is nine miles through the four lower Tangle Lakes, which gradually narrow to form the river. The river portion is 20 miles to the takeout at MP 212.5 on the Richardson Highway. The trip takes 2-3 days, and is 29 miles total.

The Tangle River Campground at Mile 22, has a boat ramp which provides access to the Upper Tangle Lakes. By portaging and lining between the lakes, with a final 2-mile portage to Dickey Lake, one can reach the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Gulkana River. The outlet is extremely shallow and rocky and after about 3 miles plunges into a steep canyon with large boulders and complex hydraulics. It is a total of 76 miles from the put-in to the take-out at BLM's Sourdough Campground on the Richardson Highway. Allow 6-7 days. An easier and more accessible put-in for the Gulkana River is at Paxson Lake Campground on the Richardson Highway.

It may be possible to find rentals and shuttle service for the lower portion of the Gulkana through local guide services, contact the BLM district office in Glennallen for information about river guides.

Further Information For Planning Your River Trip

Normally, the least expensive access to rivers not road accessible, is to fly a commercial airline to the nearest town, and then charter an air taxi to your put in point. For take-outs, again ending a trip at a village with scheduled commercial air service would be the least expensive.

Most people use collapsible boats for their trips since rigid boats such as canoes are difficult and expensive to transport by floatplane. Boat rentals can also be difficult to find in Alaska. There are rentals for canoes, kayaks and rafts out of Anchorage, Seward, Valdez, Sterling and Soldotna, but one must keep in mind transportation possibilities to and from these canoeing areas. Many of the guides, outfitters, and charter companies licensed to do business on public lands also rent boats. Listings of these companies are available from the Alaska Public Lands Information Center, 605 W. 4th Ave. #105, Anchorage, AK 99501, (907) 271-2737.

The recommended boating season extends from June-August, as many lakes do not become ice-free until June. In general, water levels can be very unpredictable. Paddlers can get information on water levels from local residents, the district office of the land managing agency for that river, air taxi operators, or from the Alaska River Forecast Center in Anchorage, at (907) 266-5160 (information for select rivers).

It is important to be totally self-sufficient on your trip. Help may often be hours/days away. The cold water temperatures make hypothermia a real threat, even in the midst of summer. Know about bear safety and proper food storage. File a trip plan with someone before you go.

Maps

Maps are available from the United States Geological Survey Office in Anchorage.

U.S. Geological Survey
4230 University Drive
Grace Hall
Anchorage, AK 99508
(907)786-7011

Fishing and Hunting

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has information regarding fishing and hunting regulations.

Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK 99518-1599
(907) 267-2100

Private Property

Not all land along riverways is public. Only the waterway and the land up to the high water mark is public land in Alaska. Please respect private property and do not disturb anything. Native land may require permission or a permit for camping. Contact the Native Corporation whose land you are travelling through.

References*

The Alaska Paddling Guide, by Jack Mosby and David Dapkus, 1992 , J & R Enterprises, PO Box 140264, Anchorage, AK 99514

The Alaska River Guide, by Karen Jettmar, 1993, Alaska Northwest Books, PO Box 10306, Portland, OR 97210, 800-452-3032

**Both available by mail order from:
Alaska Public Lands Information Center
605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 105
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 271-3290
Send \$1.00 donation for complete catalog*